Council of Medical Research, including representatives from Telecom Engineering Centre, for preliminary study on health hazards due to mobile phone towers. The Committee had extensive discussions and has opined that, overall, there is not enough evidence to show direct health hazards of RF exposure from mobile base stations.

Plot owned by Department of Posts

1830. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of plots owned by the Department of Posts lying vacant and encroached upon;

(b) the action taken to restore the encroached land to the Department; and

(c) the action taken to put vacant lands to commercial use?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, the information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) Action to put vacant land to commercial use has been initiated. The required steps, e.g. setting up of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) are under way.

Subletting the space available in post offices

1831. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to sublet space available in post offices for use of ATMs by Banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) The Department of Posts is having a Policy for hiring out of vacant built-up

space, in excess of Schedule of Accommodation, in Postal buildings on a leave and license basis to Central/State Government, Central/State Government PSUs, Nationalized and Foreign Banks of repute, National and International Financial Institutions of repute and Companies or Corporate bodies of repute. In pursuance of the policy, excess space available in three Posts Offices has already been sublet for use of ATMs by Banks.

Extra Postal Services

1832. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Postal Department is undertaking extra-postal services like accepting Income Tax return, Passport applications, etc;

(b) if so, the details of such services undertaken by the Department;

(c) whether the Department is equipped with sufficient employees for undertaking such extra-departmental services; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Department of Posts has the largest Postal Network in the world with 1,55,516 post offices of which 89% are in the rural areas. Department of Posts is leveraging its network to offer services like acceptance of payment of utility bills, sale of application forms relating to various examinations, acceptance of loan applications on behalf of financial institutions, acceptance of Income tax and Service Tax returns etc.

(b) and (d) Such additional services are taken up by the Department of Posts with the objective of optimal utilization of existing manpower and infrastructure, which is adequate for the purpose and generation of additional revenue for the Government.